



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Jon W. Fullinwider  
Chief Information Officer

Subject: **EXECUTIVE OFFICE I/T OPTIMIZATION STATUS REPORT**

On April 20, 2004, your Board instructed the Chief Information Officer to evaluate the Executive Office's Information Resource Management (IRM) capability to support and sustain Board operations with the assistance of the Internal Services Department. The assessment is to review the Executive Office's information technology (I/T) infrastructure and its operational management. This report provides the status to date on our review. The final report will provide a more detailed analysis and recommendations to improve the technical environment and support to your offices.

### Study Approach

The review team is comprised of representatives from the Chief Information Office (CIO), Internal Services Department (ISD), Department of Public Works (DPW), Chief Administrative Office (CAO), SBC Communications (SBC), Cisco Systems, and Microsoft Corporation. The complete study will occur through two major phases: a Preliminary Assessment Phase and an Analysis and Recommendations Phase.

The Preliminary Assessment Phase (Phase I) culminates with this report. Given the abbreviated timeframe for this initial report, the review team divided into two focus groups to provide immediate technical and managerial "health checks" of the Executive Office I/T services to your Board. The "health checks" examined the state of recovery of your systems to full functionality and assessed the stability of your environment.

The Analysis and Recommendations Phase (Phase II) analyzes and develops recommendations based on the findings developed during Phase I. This second phase will examine in greater depth both the technical and managerial support surrounding your I/T environment today, and develop recommendations to strengthen areas that will provide improved stability and more rapid recovery in the future.

## **Assessment – Preliminary Findings**

Historically, the Executive Office's Information Resource Management (IRM) provided three high-level areas of support: (a) help desk/desktop support; (b) application development and support; and (c) back-office server support, including support for remote access/home users. IRM is managed by a Deputy Executive Officer with staff bifurcated into two main units: "Network/Hardware Support" with eight (8) positions, and "End User Support" with eleven (11) positions.

Prior to the April 8, 2004 system disruption, a chain of events withdrew the knowledgeable IRM server staff from the day-to-day operations of the central computers that support your Board. The April 16, 2004 letter from the Executive Officer articulates the circumstances that led to the disruption, and the remedial actions taken by IRM immediately following the incident. The explanations offered in that letter are plausible and the preliminary examination by other technical resources did not find evidence to the contrary. However, even considering these extenuating circumstances, the April 8, 2004 disruption highlights the vulnerability of the I/T environment serving your Board and the commissions.

In a quick electronic survey to your office computer users last week, we found the predominate opinion to be that your services have returned to the level experienced prior to the April 8, 2004 incident. Based on an early analysis of the survey, which contained 48 responses thus far, the following patterns were observed with respect to the outage: (a) 89% of the users responded that they were affected by the event; (b) 63% stated that it took more than two (2) days to restore full functionality; and (c) 20% reported that their computer services are still not completely restored as of the survey. The types of problems appeared consistent across the Board offices, although the 2<sup>nd</sup> District seemed less affected due to the nature of the system outage.

During the "health check" of the technical environment, the team confirmed that a change in IRM's backup process is required to ensure that they have reliable backups of your Board's Active Directory (the central service that identifies who are the users of the system). The Executive Office has corrected this problem and has committed to perform all the necessary backups. A representative from Microsoft also has conducted a preliminary technical review of the Executive Office's server environment and has recommended the use of additional system health monitoring tools, as well as developing and testing a disaster recovery plan.

Although the current I/T environment supporting your Board may have stabilized for the moment and the Executive Office's IRM has plans for upgrading the server hardware supporting your Board's I/T environment, the Executive Office will need to carefully consider the long-term sustainability of the relatively complex, and demanding, I/T environment that serves your Board. A central question to be answered is whether the Executive Office should or could build and maintain the depth and breadth of resources that is required to support your current and future I/T services. A review of available

information indicates that: too few staff are available to handle the level of calls received by the Help Desk, and the call volume has recently doubled; not all positions are at the right level for the tasks being performed; project management skills need enhancing; disaster recovery plans need to be developed; and improvements are needed in the area of designing and managing effective server operations. These areas will be examined in greater detail in the next phase, with recommendations for improvement where necessary.

The next phase will explore the options to improve the I/T environment supporting your Board and providing a higher degree of user support. This would take into consideration the technical resources required for maintaining the central services (shared files, e-mail and calendaring, remote access, etc.) 24 hours, 7 days a week, and for increasing focus on end-user support, such as desktop and laptop computer support, development and support of custom applications, and central help desk service.

The final report will consider the options for improving the I/T infrastructure supporting your Board and its operational management, and will provide specific recommendations. Given the complexity of this project, we anticipate that the final report will be submitted to your Board on or before June 15, 2004.

If you have questions regarding the status of the Executive Office I/T Optimization study, please contact me at (213) 974-2008.

JWF:JW:DH:ygd

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